

“Lost off Lewes: The British warship DeBraak”

-Tours explore the surviving hull section of this 18th-century shipwreck-

Beginning on June 8, 2016, the Delaware Division of Historical and Cultural Affairs will offer tours that explore the 18th-century history, artifacts and the surviving hull section of His Majesty's Sloop DeBraak, a British warship that was escorting and protecting a convoy of merchant ships en route to the United States when it was capsized and lost off the Delaware coast on May 25, 1798. Tours will take place at 9 a.m. on the following Wednesdays and Thursdays during 2016: June 8, 9, 15, 16, 22, 23, 29 and 30; July 6, 7, 13, 14, 20, 21, 27 and 28; Aug. 3, 4, 10, 11, 17, 18, 24, 25 and 31; and Sept. 1, 7, 8, 14, 15, 21, 22, 28 and 29.



Each tour begins at the [Zwaanendael Museum](#), located at 102 Kings Highway in Lewes, Del., where a lecture on the ship will be presented in conjunction with the exhibit “[A Seaborne Citizenry: The DeBraak and Its Atlantic World](#).” Participants will learn about the history, crew and sinking of the DeBraak through a guided presentation and display of actual artifacts.

Attendees will then be transported, via van, to the DeBraak conservation facility to see the ship's surviving hull section.



Visitors enjoying a tour of the DeBraak hull which can be seen in the left of the photo.

Each tour will last approximately two hours. Individuals age 10 and up are welcome. Space is limited to 12 participants. The cost of the program is \$10 per person. For reservations (non-refundable) please visit the Shop Delaware website (go to <http://shop.delaware.gov> and click on "Tours" in the "Categories" column). For questions, call 302-645-1148. Walk-ups are welcome but space is not guaranteed.

Significance of DeBraak ...

During the late-18th and early-19th centuries, sloops of war such as DeBraak played an increasingly important role in Royal Navy campaigns. These relatively small vessels combined speed, agility, shallow draft and increased firepower, all of which made them formidable naval vessels. As the only Royal Navy sloop of war from this time period that has been recovered anywhere in the world, DeBraak serves as an invaluable historical resource for a time when Great Britain was the world's preeminent naval power.



Artistic rendition of the capsizing of the DeBraak by Peggy Kane, 1990.

The surviving section of the DeBraak's hull and its associated artifact collection have been curated by the Division of Historical and Cultural Affairs since they were acquired by the state of Delaware in 1992. Approximately one-third of the hull survives including the keel, keelson and lower framing elements, including a large section of the starboard (right) side.

About the Zwaanendael Museum ...

The Zwaanendael Museum was built in 1931 to commemorate the 300th anniversary of the state's first European colony, Swanendael, established by the Dutch along Hoorn Kill (present-day Lewes-Rehoboth Canal) in 1631. Designed by E. William Martin (architect of Legislative Hall and the Hall of Records in Dover), the museum is modeled after the town hall in Hoorn, the Netherlands, and features a stepped facade gable with carved stonework and decorated shutters. The museum's exhibits and presentations provide a showcase for Lewes-area maritime, military and social history.



DeBraak tour participants listening to a presentation at the Zwaanendael Museum. The exhibit “A Seaborne Citizenry: The DeBraak and Its Atlantic World” is in the background.

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